

A

R E V I E W

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OF

“REASONS FOR BECOMING A BAPTIST.”

BY REV. GEORGE MAY.

“Prove all things : hold fast that which is good.”

LOWELL:
WILLIAM H. STEVENS.
1846.

Joel Taylor, Printer,
No. 82 Central street.

R E V I E W .

BEFORE directing the reader's attention to the reasons for becoming a Baptist, as presented to the public by Mr. Remington, I wish to remark—

1. That in subjecting his work to the following review, to injure the author in any way before the public is no part of my design. I can have no motive for so doing, if it were in my power. Of him as a Christian, or minister, I know, personally, next to nothing; having never spoken with him a dozen times in my life. Judging, however, from the certificates which were read at the time of his examination for admission to the Worthen-street Baptist church, in Lowell, Mass., he has lived in the confidence of the denomination he has left, both as a Christian and a minister.

Nor is it my wish to excite a controversy with him, or with any other person, on points in dispute between Pedobaptists and Antipedobaptists. To such a controversy I am not at all inclined; and

would sacrifice any thing but truth to avoid it. But I am unwilling to be silent when truth is assailed. When the public are told that usages regarded as Christian by the whole Pedobaptist world, had their origin in the corruption of the “mother of harlots”—that “the only alternative is either to admit the infallibility of the Papal church, and her right to change or alter the ordinances of the gospel, or that immersion is the only scriptural baptism ;” and when these views are endorsed as “eminently scriptural,” and tending to “promote the cause of truth,” it is then both a duty and privilege to speak, and put the public in possession of the facts and arguments on the other side of these questions. When this is done, I shall be satisfied to leave them to judge for themselves.

Mr. R., it seems from his farewell letter to his late charge, received the impressions which have resulted in a revolution in his theological views, from being present at the baptism of several females, members of his congregation, who received the ordinance by immersion. When the last subject, who was “*in very feeble health*,” came up from the river, with “the ice swimming all around her,” his heart was touched and humbled.—Whose heart would not be with *such* a scene?—He returned determined “to examine more fully” the claims of a doctrine which teaches that a benevolent God has subjected this female, in ill health, to

the necessity of being immersed in a river, in the presence of a promiscuous multitude, on one of the coldest days of a northern winter, in order to her being a regularly constituted member of his visible church.

The first point to which he turned his attention in this examination was, to determine "the meaning of the word baptizo, as translated by Greek lexicographers." He "obtained the testimony of no less than twenty-three," (*not one* of whom is named) "all of whom agree that its primary meaning is, to immerse, plunge, dip, overwhelm,—while a *few* of them give, as a *remote* meaning, to wash, lave, or tinge." And having satisfied himself that the true signification of baptizo is to immerse, he concludes that immersion only is baptism. Why did he not give the names of his twenty-three lexicographers, *all* of whom agree in giving the word this signification? It is certain that the best Greek lexicographers and critics define it to sprinkle, as well as immerse, as the following extracts from a late writer on the mode and subjects of baptism who has collected them will show.

Scapula (see his lexicon) defines baptizo "immerse, wash, sprinkle."

Hedericus (see his lexicon) defines it in the same way.

Parkhurst says, it signifies to *wash with* water, as well as immerse in water.

Leigh says, the word is taken for any kind of washing; where there *is no dipping*, as well as in the sense of plunging.

Cole defines baptizo, to baptize, to wash, to sprinkle.

Wahl tells us, it signifies, first, to wash, to cleanse; secondly, to immerse.

Coulon says, immersion, washing, sprinkling, or wetting.

The above are among the best Greek lexicographers the world has ever produced, and yet not one of them, nor indeed any other, whose work I have ever seen, defines baptizo to mean nothing but to immerse. And with this agrees the testimony of all the best Greek critics.

Tertullian, who lived within one hundred years of the apostles, says: Baptizo means not only to immerse, but also to *pour*. He also defines baptizo by the Latin word *tingo*; which the best Latin scholars define, to *sprinkle*, color, or stain.

Lightfoot tells us: "The word baptism does not always denote immersion, but sometimes washing only, and *even sprinkling*."

Dr. Doddridge, known to be quite partial to immersion as a mode of baptism, and who never would therefore, have made the admission, if his knowledge of the Greek as a scholar, and his honesty as a Christian, had not compelled him to do so, says: Baptizo is sometimes used in Scripture for

washing things which were not dipped in water, but on which it was poured; as in Luke 11 : 38, and Mark 7 : 4.

Adam Clarke, than whom perhaps no better Greek scholar has lived in modern times, declares: "It is certain that baptizo means both to dip and to sprinkle."

Barnes says: it signifies, "to tinge, to stain, to dye;" and adds: "It cannot be proved from the Old or New Testament, that the idea of a complete immersion was ever connected with the word, or that it ever in any case occurred."

Professor Stuart, most grossly misrepresented by Mr. Remington, says: "I consider it quite plain that none of the circumstantial evidence" (in the bible) "proves immersion to have been exclusively the mode of Christian baptism, or even that of John's. Indeed, I consider this point so far made out, that I can hardly suppress the conviction, that if any one maintains the contrary, *it must be either because he is unable rightly to estimate the nature or power of the Greek language, or because he is influenced by party feeling.*" And yet Mr. R. tells the public, that this eminent scholar is "constrained to admit" that the signification of the term is in favor of exclusive immersion.

President Dwight, also a profound Greek critic, says: "I have examined almost one hundred instances in which the word baptizo and its deriva-

tives are used in the New Testament,—and these so far as I have observed are all the instances contained in it,—and to my apprehension, it is evident that the primary meaning of the word is *cleansing*; the mode and not the effect of washing—that the mode is usually referred to *incidentally*, wherever these words are mentioned; and that this is always the case, wherever the ordinance of baptism is mentioned, and a reference made at the same time, to the mode. These words, although often capable of denoting washing, whether by sprinkling, affusion, or immersion, (since cleansing was accomplished by the Jews in all these ways,) yet in many instances, cannot without obvious impropriety be made to signify immersion; and in others cannot signify it at all.”

To the above, might be added the testimony of a large number of others, who all agree that baptizo does not signify exclusively to immerse. No man who has carefully consulted the authority of Greek scholars for the meaning of the word, unless he is a Baptist, and more controlled by his party interests than by a love for truth, it seems to me, can be willing to hazard his reputation as an honest man, by saying this is its *only* signification. And yet this must be made out before the meaning of the term furnishes the least authority for exclusive immersion. For when it is admitted, that it denotes sprinkling, as well as immersion, then the meaning

of the term furnishes an argument not in favor, but against exclusive immersion. It no more follows because to immerse is one of its significations, that immersion is the only mode, than it follows because to sprinkle is one of its significations, that sprinkling is the only mode. To travel signifies either, to walk, or to ride : that is, both walking and riding are modes of travelling. And to infer from the fact, that baptizo signifies to immerse, that immersion is the only mode of baptism, is as illogical as to conclude, because to travel is to walk, that walking is the only mode of travelling. Among persons of common sense, if a man should insist with seriousness, that because walking is travelling, riding is not travelling, he would render himself an object of ridicule. And yet this is precisely what the author of "Reasons" does, when he attempts to prove from the signification of baptizo, that sprinkling is not baptism. If baptizo signifies both to sprinkle and to immerse, then both sprinkling and immersion are baptism.

His second reason for becoming a Baptist, is founded in the practice of the Greek church : where he tells us immersion "is the *only* mode, and has always been so from the beginning." In this he is as much mistaken as he is in the signification of baptizo. It is true, the Oriental church generally plunges the candidate, but it is not true, that this church never administers the ordinance in any other mode.

But suppose immersion is the only mode in the Oriental church, does it follow that no other mode is scriptural and right? Is the Greek church infallible? Has God any where required us to copy her examples, rather than those of any other church? It is admitted on all hands, that the Greek church is one of the most corrupt in existence. Mr. R., if he knows any thing about the Greek church, will not deny this. Yet he thinks the application of the term baptizo to immersion, by this corrupt and wicked church, "is an imperishable monument to its truth"—the truth that immersion *only* is baptism.

Again: Why did he not tell his readers that the Greek church baptizes infants? Is he ignorant of this fact, as he seems to be that immersion is not the only mode practiced in the Greek church? Or does he consider that its practice is good authority for the *mode*, while it furnishes no authority whatever by which to determine who are the proper *subjects* of the ordinance? Either cease to cite the practice of the Oriental church as authority for exclusive immersion, or admit its practice as authority for administering the ordinance to infants.

In summing up on this point he assumes not only in the absence of evidence in favor of the assumption, but against the most conclusive evidence to the contrary, that sprinkling was substituted for immersion by the church of Rome. By virtue of authority claimed by her, he says, "*she changed*" the

practice. But this should be proved, not asserted simply. Sprinkling was the practice of the church, as will be shown hereafter, long before the church of Rome set up its arrogant claims.

After this ineffectual effort to prove that the signification of baptizo, and the practice of the Greek church, are both in favor of exclusive immersion, he cites several passages of holy writ, which speak of baptism, substituting for baptized, immersed, and most dogmatically asks: "What, if this word had been properly rendered" (i. e. rendered to immerse) "by the translators of our English version of the bible, would have become of sprinkling?" And what, my good brother, if the translators had rendered it to sprinkle, as they might have done with as much propriety as to render it to immerse, would have become of immersion?

He next proceeds to inquire whether the Scripture examples of baptism set forth immersion as "*essential* to the ordinance." And begins by asserting with his usual arrogance, that "John the Baptist baptized by immersion." The *only* evidence he offers to sustain this position is—

1. That he "baptized *in* the river Jordan." But Mr. R., if he knows half as much as he would have it understood he knows, is not ignorant that the original might have been rendered with equal propriety *at*, or *by*, or *with*, as in; and that it often is so rendered in the New Testament. He baptized *with*, or *at*, or *by* the river Jordan.

2. "The reason why he baptized at Ænon, near to Salim, was that there was much water there." As if John selected a place for his ministry where there was much water, because he needed much water to administer the ordinance of baptism. Mr. R. has been, until quite recently, a member of a church which holds annually what are called camp meetings, and he is well aware that they uniformly select for such meetings, a place where there is a plentiful supply of water. But who ever dreamed that they select a place where there is much water, because they need it to baptize their converts in? Is it asked, why then did John select such a place? The answer is, for the same reason that the Methodists select a place of much water for their yearly meetings; because they need it to supply the necessities of such a multitude as attend these meetings. Great crowds attended upon the ministry of John the Baptist—"all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem." And much water, consequently, was needed to supply the wants of man and beast in so great a crowd.

Of the baptism of Christ he says: "Jesus was baptized, not *with* Jordan, but *in* it." Was Mr. R. baptized *in* the Merrimack, or was it rather *with* the water of that stream? By what authority did he substitute for a river, in which he insists the Savior was baptized, the baptistery of the Worthen-street Baptist church? *Why*, unlike him he pro-

fesses to follow, be baptized *with*, not *in*, a Jordan? And why has he substituted, as it is reported was done in his case, warm for cold water? Perhaps he was not then sufficiently converted to subscribe to the sentiment sometimes sung on such occasions,

“Brethren, if your hearts are warm,
Ice and snow will do no harm.”

John the Baptist said of himself, (Mark 3: 11,) and Christ said of him, (Acts 1: 5,) that he baptized *with* water. Rev. Mr. Remington says he did not. Which should be believed I leave to the reader to determine.

Aware that though he could make out that John did baptize by immersion, a difficulty would still meet him in the fact that John's baptism is not regarded as Christian baptism, he next labors to show that John's baptism was the Christian ordinance. In this, however, he again signally fails, as the following considerations, borrowed from a late author, among others, show.

1. John did not baptize in the name of the Trinity.

2. Christ did not institute John's baptism.

3. Christian baptism was not instituted until after the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. It was instituted in connection with the giving of the great commission. Matt. 28: 19, 20.

4. John baptized “unto”—that is, in order to—“repentance.”

5. Some of John's disciples afterwards received the *Christian ordinance*. Acts 19.

Mr. R. fails to prove that John the Baptist baptized by immersion. But suppose he had established that point, it would not then follow that immersion is *the* mode of Christian baptism, because John's baptism was not the Christian ordinance.

Next comes the case of the eunuch. (Acts 8: 35.) He relies, in this case, on four circumstances to prove that immersion was the mode. "1. The eunuch said, Here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized. 2. And both went down into the water. 3. When in the water, Philip baptized him. 4. After his baptism they came up out of the water."

But does any one, or do all these circumstances put together, make out a clear case of immersion? All these circumstances meet, in hundreds of instances every year, in cases of baptism in the church to which Mr. R. has formerly belonged, and yet the persons are not immersed, as he well knows. Individuals go to the minister, and request, as did the eunuch of Philip, to be baptized. The administrator and candidate, *both* go down into the water. While in the water, the candidate kneels, or stands, and the administrator pours or sprinkles water upon him. After the candidate is baptized they both come up out of the water.

Beside, the Greek words translated *into*, and *out*

of, might have been translated with perfect propriety, *to* and *from*; and frequently are so translated. They went down *to* the water, and came up *from* the water. The case of the eunuch does not therefore furnish a clear case of immersion.

From the case of the eunuch, he passes to the baptism of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost. The difficulties which meet him here, are two. 1. The want of time in which to immerse such a multitude. 2. The want of conveniences to administer the ordinance in his mode. After an attempt to remove these difficulties, in which there is some evasion, and—as usual—much assumption of what should have been proved, and which, after all, does not remove them, he dismisses this case without making use of a *single consideration to show that they were immersed*. But he knows, or ought to know, that if he could remove these difficulties, it is then mere assumption that they were immersed, not sprinkled. However, he is determined upon being a Baptist; hence what cannot be proved, must be taken for granted.

But the circumstances in this case are clearly against the idea that immersion was the mode. Look at them as stated by Fowler, in his work on baptism. “The occasion was unanticipated. Probably at sunrise not an individual thought of being baptized. The people were principally strangers from different and distant countries. Parthians,

Medes, Elamites, dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judea, in Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, &c. &c. They could have made no previous preparation for a change of garments. No public nor private baths had been engaged so far as we learn; nor could there be—for the whole city were opposed to the apostles and their adherents; and they were many miles from both Jordan and Ænon. There is not a word said, moreover, of their leaving the place where they were assembled. And under these circumstances the baptism took place the same day. The meeting began at the third hour; that is, nine o'clock. Several sermons were preached, and exhortations given. All this must have occupied several hours—not less than five or six; after which three thousand were baptized by twelve men (for there is not an intimation that any but the apostles were concerned in it) in the midst of a great city; making two hundred and fifty apiece, which, reckoning one in two minutes, would require between eight and nine hours." Now will any one say the mode in this instance was immersion? It seems impossible that this was the mode.

The last Scripture example which he examines, is that of the jailer and his household. (Acts 16.) He thinks the circumstances here are "*altogether*" in favor of immersion. What are the circumstances on which he relies?

1. "The jailer brought out Paul and Silas."

On which he asks: "What did he bring them out of? The *prison*?" But who says he brought them out of the prison? The historian says no such thing. Dr. Clarke says: "He brought them out of the dungeon in which they were confined." It is quite improbable that he would take them out of the house at midnight, for the purpose of asking what he must do to be saved, which he could do equally well in it.

2. "When they" (the jailer and his household) "were baptized, *they went out of his house*, where he washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his house." I ask again, is it the historian or Mr. Remington, who says they went out of his house? This should be proved; not asserted simply.

3. "It appears that *after* this," (after he was baptized,) "he brought them into his house." No doubt it so appears to him. When men *earnestly desire* to believe any thing—as it is quite evident from his farewell letter to his late charge, and the loose manner in which he reasons, he did to believe in exclusive immersion—they will sometimes see evidence of its truth, where there is none to be seen by unbiased minds. It is quite certain it does not "*appear*" from the history.

It is probable that the jailer and his family resided in another apartment of the building in which the prisoners were kept. The circumstances con-

nected with the earthquake, which shook the prison and awoke him, were such as to convince him of its supernatural character. And aroused to a sense of his guilt as a sinner, he takes a light and goes into the dungeon and brings out the apostles, who spake unto him and his household—affected like the jailer himself—the word of the Lord. He washed their stripes, believed, and was baptized with his household, and brought them into his own apartment of the same house, and set meat before them. “Most certainly the brief circumstances here noted are altogether” *against* “immersion.”

Now, had Mr. R. proved beyond doubt that in three-fourths of all the instances of baptism recorded in the New Testament, immersion was the mode, he would only have proved that immersion is *a* scriptural mode of baptism, and not that it is the *only* scriptural mode. But he has not done this. Although he has taken the strongest cases to be found on record, he has failed to make out from the circumstances *one unequivocal* case of immersion. The *possibility* that immersion was the mode in some of the instances named in the New Testament is not denied; but it is denied that there is *one unequivocal* case of immersion to be found from Matthew to Revelation. Were such a case to be found, the Baptists would have found it long since; for they “*compass sea and land to make one proselyte*”—to immersion.

The next topic of examination, in reasons for becoming a Baptist, is those passages of Scripture which speak of baptism figuratively or metaphorically. But do these favor exclusive immersion? Let us examine a few.

“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” (1 Cor. 10: 12.) In the account of the passage of the children of Israel through the Red sea, (Ex. 14) to which there is an obvious reference by the apostle, we are told that the waters were divided, and formed a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left; and that they went through on *dry ground*. From which it is certain they were not immersed in the waters of the sea. In this account by Moses, there is no mention made of the baptism referred to by Paul. This omission, however, is supplied by Asaph, in the 77th Psalm; where, in allusion to the event, he says: “The waters saw thee, O God; the waters saw thee; they were afraid; the depths also were troubled; the clouds *poured* out water. Thy way was in the sea. Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses.” Here we have the baptism spoken of by the apostle. The mode was *sprinkling*—the water fell on them from the cloud.

Again: “Which stood only in meats and drinks

and *divers washings*," that is, according to Dr Clarke, "*divers baptisms*." (Heb. 9: 10.) *Divers baptisms*, or washings, must be washings differing in something, one from another. And as the element in which these washings took place was the same (water), the difference must consist of course in the mode of applying the water; sometimes by dipping the article into the water, sometimes by pouring or sprinkling water upon the article. In this instance then, it signifies something beside immersion.

Once more: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. (Matt. 3: 11.) The absurdity of supposing the word to be used in the sense of immersion here, will best be seen by substituting Baptist phraseology for the phraseology of the bible. He shall *immerse* you *in* the *Holy Ghost*, and *in fire*. Other passages might be adduced, but these are sufficient.

His last inquiry respecting the *mode* of baptism, was concerning the practice of the primitive church. This must be settled by the testimony of history. Of this he thinks there "is a great abundance" in favor of the position of Antipedobaptists. But one would judge from his selections that next to none of it is any thing like relevant. The point to be proved, is not that baptism was administered by immersion in the primitive churches. This is not disputed. But that *baptism was never administered*

by any other mode. Out of the “abundance” of testimony, he has, of course, selected the best. And yet it is worthy of note, that but *one* (Grotius) out of the *eleven* he calls as witnesses, states that baptism was administered in the primitive church by immersion *only*. He opens his case with talking about the abundance of his testimony and the merits of it, and it turns out that all his witnesses, save one, refuse to testify to the fact to be made out—that baptism was not administered by affusion or sprinkling. Let us look at the testimony on the other side.

Irenæus, who was born about the time the Apostle John died, speaks of a sect of Christians who “baptized by an *affusion* of water mixed with oil.”

Athanasius, another of the fathers, speaks of a sect who practiced “baptism by *sprinkling*.”

Eusebius, a historian, who lived but a short time after Novitian, who became a Christian about a hundred and fifty years after the death of the apostles, says of Novitian: “Baptism was administered to him by affusion or sprinkling, ACCORDING TO THE CUSTOM OF THOSE TIMES.”

Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, speaking of some who had received baptism by sprinkling, says: “It [sprinkling] is of equal validity with the salutary bath.” Cyprian lived about a hundred and fifty years after the apostles.

Dupin tells us, Constantine the Great was “bap-

tized lying on his bed ;” which forbids the supposition that he was immersed.

Other authority might be given, but this is sufficient to show that from within a short time of the death of the apostles, sprinkling was a mode of baptism in the Christian church. And with this I leave the reader to give what credit he thinks he ought to give to the statement of the “late Pastor of St. Paul’s Methodist Episcopal Church,” that “*it was not until the year 1311 that dipping or sprinkling were declared to be indifferent.*”

His ludicrous effort to prove that plunging is the only mode of baptism, he finishes thus : “The relics of baptisteries which are now standing and known to be of ancient date, are so many monuments in favor of immersion.” Indeed ! Has Mr. R. ever visited Rome ? Will he favor us when the second edition of “Reasons” appears—if it ever sees the light—by telling us if any remnants of John’s girdle have been found in or around these relics of baptisteries ?

We have now shown that the signification of baptizo is against exclusive immersion ; that it is not sanctioned by the practice of the Greek church, and that if it were it would not follow that sprinkling is wrong ; that the efforts of Mr. R. to make out a clear case of immersion from the bible instances of baptism are a failure ; that where baptism is spoken of symbolically, it sometimes at least is used

in the sense of sprinkling; and that sprinkling has been the practice of the church from the days of the apostles. Before going into an examination of his reasons for rejecting the baptism of infants we will notice one other consideration (among many) against the notion that immersion is essential to baptism.

Immersion is not adapted to universal practice. A great portion of the inhabitants of our globe live in a colder climate than ours. In some parts the winters are from six to ten months in length; and the cold, therefore, must be extreme. In the 16th parallel of latitude the water is frozen for the most part of the year, and is obtained for common use only by melting snow and ice. "In Greenland and the coldest countries of this region, brandy and mercury freeze during the winter. The whole inside of huts is usually lined during the night with ice, formed of the vapor of breath, which must be cut away in the morning. If cold air suddenly enter the house, vapors fall in a shower of snow. Trees are rent with frost, and rocks explode with a noise like that of firearms." (Woodbridge's geography.) In countries thus bound with ice, immersion cannot be practicable. And yet in these regions of perpetual frost dwell millions of the human race. That immersion would tend greatly to injure health in many cases which must occur, if immersion is the only mode, must be apparent to all. That fatal effects have sometimes followed we have

the most conclusive proof. Who can believe that a God of mercy requires persons in ill health to be plunged in water in order to their becoming members of his visible church, especially those in the higher latitudes?

Beside: It is quite certain that the excitement produced in the mind of the candidate—especially if the candidate be a female—by the circumstances which generally accompany the administration of baptism in this mode, such as the promiscuous immersion of the sexes, in the presence of assembled hundreds, made up not only of the prayerful and serious, but the thoughtless and sportive, must often unfit the mind for the reception of so solemn an ordinance. In very many cases, it is apparent that this excitement is such as to drown the reflections and destroy the feelings which should always accompany the administration of this rite. Here let me appeal—without intending any thing invidious to the person referred to, whose reputation and intelligence, I am told, suffers nothing in comparison with that of others—to a case furnished by Mr. R. himself. I allude to the case of the young lady, whose immersion produced such an impression upon his mind. What were the circumstances in this case? The candidate was a female. She was in ill health. The rite was administered in a river, and in the presence of a promiscuous assembly. It was on one of the coldest days of the past winter.

These were the circumstances. What was the effect they produced? Mr. R. shall answer this question: "And every step to the shore she repeated her praises, *declaring that the water was not cold though the ice was swimming all around her.*" It is not possible that a mind under the influence of an excitement so *intense* as to render a person under such circumstances insensible to cold, can be in a proper state to receive Christian baptism. The excitement here described is not peculiar to this case. Hundreds of similar cases occur every year. For these reasons, as well as others which might be named, immersion in many cases is impracticable. Baptism is obligatory upon Christians of all climes, and upon both sexes; and as it is often impracticable, the conclusion is, that it is not essential to the ordinance.

Having satisfied himself, that during the twenty years he has been in the ministry he has all along been acting in violation of the great commission, by baptizing *with* water, he now begins to doubt that he has been right in supposing that *penitents* and *infants* are proper *subjects* of the ordinance.

His authority for giving the ordinance to penitents he had drawn from Acts 2: 38, which he now finds does not warrant the baptism of such persons. Let us examine it.

If the reader will turn to the text, and read it in connection with the context, he will find that the

direction to be baptized is given to penitents, as such. Under the sermon of Peter, which a multitude made up of men of every nation heard, every man in his own language, and in which Peter had asserted and proved the messiahship of Christ, they were pricked in their hearts; that is, convicted of their guilt in rejecting Christ as an impostor. And plainly perceiving that there was no hope for them but in the mercy of him whom they had crucified, they inquire: "What must we do?" To which Peter answers: "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, *for* the remission of your sins, and ye shall *receive* the gift of the Holy Ghost. And they that gladly received his word were baptized." Now is here any thing containing an intimation that it is improper to baptize a penitent, not yet justified? Does he direct them to wait until their sins are remitted, and they receive the Holy Ghost, and then be baptized? So far from it, he directs them, being penitents, to be baptized *for* the remission of their sins, and that they *may receive* the Holy Ghost. Here, then, is a clear case of baptism administered to penitents.

He seems equally pleased with the conclusion to which he comes respecting the propriety of administering baptism to infants; and tells us the authority for this usage "is not found in the New Testament, not in the Old, nor yet in the Old and New Testaments when taken together." Whether these

conclusions have been arrived at with logical fairness will best appear when we have examined the premises from which they are drawn.

He begins with an examination of Matt. 28 : 19, 20. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, &c.; and concludes that because infants cannot be *taught*, they are not to be baptized. But this is begging the question. The text does not assert, or imply that none are to be baptized until after the truths of the gospel are taught them. The commission does require ministers to disciple—by baptizing and teaching—all nations. True, infants are not named, neither are adults named, but as the term used is a collective one it must include *both*. How was it possible for Christ, in the use of a single term, to require his ministers to baptize infants as well as adults, with more explicitness than he has here done it?

From this he passes to the parallel passage in Mark 16 : 15. Go ye into all the world, &c. On this passage he reasons thus : “I said to myself, infants are creatures; but did our Lord intend the gospel should be preached to them? Certainly not; for he adds: He that believeth and is baptized, &c. It follows, therefore, that as infants cannot believe, so the Master did not commission his servants to baptize them.” But does this text teach that faith is a prerequisite to baptism? If it proves this, it proves too much for him. If it proves that infants

should not be baptized because of their want of faith, it proves with equal clearness that those who die in infancy cannot be saved for the same reason. If it does not make faith in the case of one dying in infancy necessary to salvation, neither does it make it necessary to their receiving Christian baptism. Mr. R.'s argument stated in the form of a syllogism is as follows :

None but believers should be baptized ;

Infants are not believers ;

Therefore, infants should not be baptized.

Let us test the soundness of this argument by another :

None but believers can be saved ;

Infants are not believers ;

Therefore, infants cannot be saved.

But he says (page 34) : " I believe all who die in infancy are saved." But if all who die in infancy are saved, and " infants cannot believe," then faith is not essential to their salvation. According to his own theory then, this text does not make faith a prerequisite to salvation in the case of those who die in infancy. But if it is not necessary to their salvation, neither is it necessary to their being baptized. The want of faith in an infant, therefore, furnishes no reason why he should not be baptized.

Another difficulty in the way of his rejecting infant baptism meets him in Mark 10 : 14. " Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them

not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." By the phrase, kingdom of heaven, or kingdom of God, as it reads in Luke, our Lord obviously means his visible church; as the following considerations show.

1. This is the phraseology Christ usually employs when speaking of the visible church, taking the terms in their widest sense, and including whatever appertains to this church. Matt. 21: 43; Mark 4: 30; 9: 1; 15: 43; Luke 7: 28; 17: 20; 21: 31; Matt. 11: 11; with many others too numerous to mention.

2. That he intends the gospel church is inferred from the injunction, "Forbid them not to come unto me." Now in what sense, I ask, is it possible to hinder infants from coming to Christ, except to hinder them from coming *visibly* to him? We cannot hinder them from coming to him in the sense of their going to heaven, or being saved. To me it seems impossible to conceive of any sense in which man can hinder infants from coming to Christ, except by forbidding a visible presentation of them to him. But how, I ask, can there be such a visible presentation of infants to Christ as that they shall become a part of the subjects of his kingdom—as he declares them to be—but by their admission to his church?

3. That by the kingdom of God is intended the church on earth, and not the church in heaven, ap-

pears from the declaration, "*of such is the kingdom of God.*" It is not true that infants, with the nature with which they are born into the world, are meet for heaven. This Mr. R. concedes. He says: "We all believe that infants are unholy, and as such are not fit for heaven, and can no more go to that holy place than we can without a change of heart." Still he believes—and in this we agree—that "through the infinite benevolence of God, as they have never sinned, so the merits of Christ will be unconditionally applied (at their death) to regenerate and save them. Bnt while unregenerated, as were the infants brought to Christ, and respecting whom he says, "*of such is,*" &c., they are not meet for the enjoyments of the future world. But if Christ intends by the above phraseology his visible church, then it was not possible for him to teach more explicitly than he has yet done it, that infants are entitled to membership in his church; and that it is not right to forbid their becoming members of it. To do so is to disobey Christ.

To this argument he objects, that Christ's visible kingdom has laws to be obeyed, and privileges to be enjoyed; and as infants are neither capable of obeying the one, nor enjoying the other, they cannot be proper subjects of this kingdom. It is a sufficient reply to this objection, to say, that the inhabitants of the future world are as really subject to law, and entitled to the enjoyment of privileges,

as the saints on earth are ; and that, unless there is an instantaneous expansion of mind in the case of those who die in infancy—which cannot be proved—they will, on entering it, be as incapable of obedience to law, and the enjoyment of privileges, as they are in the church on earth.

As to his criticisms upon the term *such*, which amount to making Christ utter nonsense—like the following : Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, because the kingdom of heaven is composed of Christians—they are unworthy of refutation, and I pass them as such. The above text furnishes an argument in favor of infant baptism, which Antipedobaptist sophistry will never be able to overthrow.

Next in order comes his examination of 1 Cor. 7 : 14. “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband : else were your children unclean ; but now are they holy.” By holy and unclean, according to his interpretation, we are to understand legitimate and illegitimate. Else were your children illegitimate ; but now are they legitimate. This, he tells us, is the true meaning. But if so, then it will follow, that all children whose parents are unbelievers are illegitimate. For the apostle makes their being accounted holy, *to depend upon the faith of the parent ; and on this alone*. It follows, therefore, if the children are accounted legit-

imate (holy) on the ground that one or both the parents are unbelievers, that all children whose parents are both unbelievers are illegitimate children. But does Mr. R. mean to make the apostle teach, that the offspring of persons united in matrimony, and who are not Christians, are illegitimate? He does teach this, if his construction of the passage is correct.

But this is not the sense of the text. The word *unclean*, in almost all instances in the Scriptures, denotes that which may not be offered to God. To be holy, as here used, is the converse of being unclean; and denotes, therefore, that which may be offered to God. By *unbelievers* the apostle means *heathen*, or *idolators*. It is of unbelievers in this sense he is speaking. The obvious meaning, therefore, of the text is: that though the children of *two idolatrous parents* could not be offered to God by them, under the Christian system, *for the very good reason that they reject that system*; yet, if *one* of the parents was a Christian, the idolatry of the other did not render the so doing improper—clearly implying the obligation of Christian parents to consecrate their children to God. And as baptism under the gospel is the visible sign of consecration, it follows that children have a right to this ordinance. (See, on this passage, Dr. Dwight, Dr. Clarke and Macknight.)

From this he turns to the cases where the baptism

of *households* is spoken of in the New Testament. In the examination of these he is under the necessity of *assuming*, as those have done who have gone over the ground before him, that there were no infants in these households. But Pedobaptists may, with just the same propriety, assume that there were infants in *all* these households, as their opponents that there were infants in *none* of them. The limits prescribed to this review will not allow of noticing more than one. Nor is this necessary in making out the rightfulness of infant baptism ; for if *one* instance can be found where it is clear that a household was baptized on the faith of its head, then such baptisms are scriptural and proper. If Mr. R. could find ten, or ten times ten households, which had been baptized, and could make out from the circumstances an absolute certainty that all the members of them were believers, they would not weigh a feather in the scale against *one* where it is clear the household was baptized on the faith of the head. Any amount of testimony of a *negative* character, furnishes no reason for rejecting that of *one* credible witness, who testifies *positively*. Acts 16 : 14, 15. “ A certain woman, named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshiped God, heard us ; whose heart the Lord opened that she attended unto the things spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be

faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there. And she constrained us." The above contains the account, and *the whole* of the account, of the baptism of Lydia's household. And what, I ask, can any man unbiased by party feeling, find in this relation which furnishes the most *distant intimation* that any member of the household believed except Lydia herself. "A certain *woman*, whose heart the Lord opened, that *she* attended," &c. "And *she* besought us, saying, If ye have judged *me* faithful." If her *whole family* believed, as their faith was vastly more important than their baptism, the historian would have named it. But not a word is spoken, not an intimation given, that a single person believed except Lydia; and yet the whole were baptized. So clear a case of the baptism of a household on the faith of its head is here furnished that I cannot resist the conviction, that if Mr. R. had not sat down to the investigation of this account with his mind made up to reject the idea that it is right to baptize infants, he would never have conceived that the circumstances noted in it warrant the conclusion that more than one of the family (Lydia) believed.

Having disposed of the cases of baptism by households, recorded in the New Testament, he takes up the argument of Pedobaptists in favor of this usage, founded on the nature and perpetuity of the covenant of God with Abraham. The argu-

ment is this: By a provision in the covenant made by God with Abraham, his posterity, including infants, (see Gen. 17) were entitled to the sign of the covenant—circumcision. The covenant made with Abraham is—with the substitution of baptism for circumcision—the covenant of the gospel church. Hence unless it can be shown that the provision for giving the sign of the covenant to infants under the former dispensation, has been repealed under the latter, the children of believing parents are entitled to the sign of the covenant still. In this argument he denies two things. 1. That the covenant made with Abraham is the covenant of the Christian church. 2. That baptism under the gospel is what circumcision was under the law—a sign and seal of the covenant. Let us then inquire: Is the Abrahamic covenant, with the exception above referred to, the covenant of the gospel church? This is shown by the apostle in the fourth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans; where he proves most conclusively the *evangelical* character of the covenant made with Abraham; showing that Abraham himself was justified by faith while he was yet uncircumcised; that the covenant included not only Jews, but also the *Gentiles*; that Abraham is the father of *all* true believers; that believers *under the gospel*, as well as under the law of circumcision, are *the seed* referred to in that provision of the covenant by which God engaged, saying, “*I will be a*

God unto thee, and thy seed after thee ;” and that the blessing of justification by faith is received by uncircumcised Gentiles *under* this covenant. It is not possible to give a rational interpretation of the apostle’s argument, in this chapter, against the Jew who looked for salvation by obedience to the law of circumcision, but upon the supposition that the Abrahamic covenant is the Christian covenant. This is the opinion of Macknight, and also of Dr. Clarke, who, in his comment on the eleventh verse, says: “The whole of the apostle’s argument in this chapter proves that believing Gentiles are the seed of Abraham, to whom, as well as to himself, the promise was made ; and that the promise made to him is the same in effect as that promise made to us ; consequently, *it is the Abrahamic covenant in which we now stand.*”

But this point is settled still more clearly, if possible, in Gal. 3: 14, 16, 17, 29. “That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to thy seed, as of many ; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. And if ye be Christ’s,

then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Here the apostle teaches that the Gentiles are included in the covenant made with Abraham, that true believers are the seed of Abraham, and therefore heirs according to *the promise*; that the covenant made with Abraham was the gospel covenant, "confirmed" or ratified "*in Christ*;" and that it was not abolished with the *Levitical law*. It must, therefore, be the covenant of God with man now.

The passage quoted by Mr. R. from Heb. 8: 6, to show that the Abrahamic covenant has been displaced by another and better covenant, is not to the point—as the reader may see by turning to the passage—because it refers not to the Abrahamic, but to the *Mosaic*, or *Sinaitic*, covenant.

With these remarks, I leave the reader to judge for himself, whether the covenant made with Abraham is the covenant of the Christian church; and proceed to show that under the gospel, baptism has been substituted in the place of circumcision. This appears: 1. From the *import* of the two rites. Circumcision gave the subject of it a *visible* connection with the church and its covenant blessings. Baptism does the same thing. 2. Circumcision was a divinely appointed outward and *visible* seal, by which the covenant was ratified; that is, God by appointing it, pledged himself to Abraham and his seed, and Abraham and his seed by submitting to

the rite promised on their part to fulfil the conditions of the covenant. So baptism is the *visible* pledge of our renunciation of sin and our obedience to God on our part, and on the part of God by his appointment of the rite, the *visible* pledge to be our God. If it is objected that infants are not capable of giving such a pledge, the answer is, that the objection has all the force against the *circumcision* of infants that it has against their being *baptized*; and as it did not render the former improper, it cannot render the latter so. From the perfect similarity, therefore, between the two rites, it is inferred that the latter was substituted for the former.

2. But the position, that baptism takes the place of circumcision, rests, if possible, upon a firmer basis still. "In whom also ye are circumcised, with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism." Col. 2: 11, 12. Here we are taught the substitution of baptism for circumcision, by the apostle's calling the former the *Christian circumcision*. It appears then, that the covenant made with Abraham in the covenant of the Christian church, with a substitution of baptism for circumcision; and that as the original right of infants to the sign of the covenant has never been repealed, infants have a right to it now.

Mr. R. thinks baptism cannot be the substitute for

circumcision because Paul circumcised Timothy after he had been baptized ; and thus (if both were a sign of the covenant) Timothy received the sign of the covenant twice. I answer, that when Paul circumcised Timothy, circumcision was not the sign of the covenant, but had been abolished to give place to baptism ; that Paul did not give the rite to Timothy as a sign of the covenant, but merely that the Jews might not object to him as a religious teacher ; and that he did it on the principle that “ in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avail any thing.” Timothy would neither be better with it, nor worse without it ; yet, as his being uncircumcised would furnish to the Jews an objection to receiving him as a religious teacher, and as no principle would now be violated in so doing—the rite having been abolished—he circumcised him. (See Adam Clarke on the circumcision of Timothy.)

To the objection raised on the fact that those who had been circumcised were baptized on their rejection of Moses and embracing Christ ; which he thinks was unnecessary, if the covenant was the same, and baptism took the place of circumcision as the sign of it—I reply, that when circumcision was abolished as the sign, they were without the sign. Hence the necessity of their being baptized.

To the case referred to by him in the 15th chapter of Acts, where he tells us “ *we see circumcision put down, and no substitute proposed in its room,*

in a council of the elders and churches," I answer : that council did not put down circumcision. It had been put down before by Christ, and baptism put in the place of it. Nor did that council condemn it as wicked, as appears from the fact that in the very next chapter we have the account of Paul's circumcising Timothy, *after* the action of the council. All that the council condemned was the doctrine set up, in some of the churches, that under the gospel, circumcision was still *necessary to salvation*.

His conversion to his new theological views is perfected with an effort to show from the fathers that infant baptism was not practiced in the primitive churches. But his attempt to maintain his position on this question by an appeal to the fathers, is a more perfect failure than his effort to press them into his service on the question of immersion. He appeals to but two of them, and both these are against him.

1. The first is Tertullian, of whom he says : "He wrote a book against the *indiscriminate baptism of minors*." Mark that ! Not against infant baptism, but against the *indiscriminate baptism of minors*. From this author he makes the following extract : "Let them (minors) come while they are growing up, and learn ; and let them be instructed when they come ; and when they understand Christianity let them profess themselves Christians"—be baptized. Now in all this there is not one word against

infant baptism. Not one! But if by any possibility, Mr. R. could prove that his author wrote a book against infant baptism in the churches, it would be fatal to his position, since his writing against the practice would imply that it was approved by the churches. Why, I ask, should Tertullian, or any other man, publish a book against it, and oppose it as heresy, if the usage did not prevail?

2. He says: "Fidus, a country bishop, wrote to Cyprian of Carthage to know whether children might be baptized before they were eight days old; for by his bible he could not tell." The facts in this case are—as he knows, or ought to know—that the question was not proposed to Cyprian to be answered by him, but to a council of sixty-six bishops, assembled at Carthage, through Cyprian as president of the council. Nor did the question arise from any doubts in the mind of Fidus that it was right to baptize infants, but from doubt whether the rite should be administered earlier, or be deferred until the child arrived at the age at which infants were circumcised under the law—at eight days old. The form of the question proposed, the manner in which it was entertained, and the decision to which the council came, furnish evidence of the strongest kind, that the baptism of infants was the practice of the church. Did Fidus ask if infants should be baptized? Not at all. But at what *age* it should be done. If the council had not been in the habit

of regarding the baptism of infants as right, and of practicing the usage themselves, they would have regarded the introduction of such a question as heresy, and would have rebuked it. But did they rebuke it? So far from it, they proceed to give in substance the following answer to the question of Fidus: "that baptism is not to be denied to infants newly born."

Such is the historical authority which leads to a change in his views respecting the validity of infant baptism: authority which not only does not warrant such change, but which is decidedly against it. A man who will change an opinion for such a reason is prepared for any revolution in his opinions, not only without reasons, but against weighty reasons to the contrary. Here we might rest the question, as affected by the testimony of the fathers. He has introduced the best he could command, and it is *against* him. We will, however, look at the testimony of a few of the fathers and historians on the other side of the question.

Origen, who was born about eighty-five years after the age of the apostles, says: "According to the *usage* of the church, baptism is given to infants."

Justin Martyr, born near the close of the first century, in speaking of those who were members of the church, says: "A part of these were sixty or seventy years old; who were made disciples to Christ in *their infancy*." But they could have been

made disciples while infants in no way but by baptism; and as they were, at the time Justin Martyr wrote, seventy years old, they must have been baptized either during the first century, or very early in the second.

Chrysostom, after enumerating the advantages of baptism, says: "For this cause we baptize infants also."

Augustine, in a work against the Donatists, says: "The whole church practice infant baptism."

Pelagius says: "Baptism ought to be administered to infants with the same sacramental words as it is to elder persons." Again: "I never heard of any, not even the most *impious heretic*, who denied baptism to infants."

In this examination of Mr. Remington's reasons for becoming a Baptist, I have endeavored not to misrepresent or misstate them; but to meet his positions with fairness. It is possible, that in some cases I may have stated his positions incorrectly; but if so, it has been done unintentionally. There are one or two reasons *against* becoming a member of the Baptist denomination with which he has connected himself, to which I wish to call the reader's attention, and will dismiss the subject.

The first is founded in the fact, that they exclude from the Table of the Lord acknowledged Christians; which usage, it is believed, is unchristian,

having no foundation in the instructions of Christ or his apostles. It cannot be reconciled with the spirit of mutual love among Christians, so frequently and earnestly insisted upon in the New Testament. They admit that the members of other denominations are Christians, and sometimes make use of such expressions as, "Our dear brethren of the Methodist church," when a minister comes from it to their own. And yet, strange to tell, they deny these same "*dear brethren*" a place with them when they come around the sacramental table of a common Savior and Lord. Br. Remington's farewell letter to his late charge abounds with expressions of confidence in their devotion, piety, purity and Christianity, but if any one of them should call on him at the place of his new charge on communion-day, would he invite them to receive the emblems of their Savior's death with him? *This he cannot do without subjecting himself to ecclesiastical discipline.* Should he go back to the old altar, sanctified by many a dear recollection, as it surely is; and should those brethren, who have "always treated me [him] in the most gentlemanly and Christian-like manner," and whom he "loves no less now than ever," ask him to administer to them once again the tokens of the Savior's plighted love, would he do it? No; though he loves them for their "simplicity," their "zeal," their "unity of evangelical faith," their "*experimental and practi-*

cal piety," he can break bread to them no more, until they follow his example and go down the banks of a Jordan. What have they done? Oh, they have sung, and prayed, and loved God as heretofore. Why, then, will he not break bread to them? *He has changed his theological views!!*

If the members of other denominations are Christians, this usage is in direct contravention of the command of the Redeemer: "Drink ye *all* of this"—that is, every one of you. Christ requires all his disciples to drink of it. They say by this usage, No, not until you become members of *our* church; and thus, in effect, forbid our obeying the command of Christ. It avails nothing to say, as is sometimes done, Christians of other denominations are not denied the elements of the Savior's death by being denied admission to their table—that they have the opportunity of obeying the command at their own communion-tables, for they do not believe that other denominations celebrate *the* Christian eucharist: else why is it a disciplinary offence for their own members to receive it with them. They do not admit that it is celebrated according to the institution of Christ any where but in their own church; they deny us admission to it there; and do they not thus deny us admission to it every where? But you can join a Baptist church. Yes, and this perhaps we will do, when we become *satisfied* that we cannot enjoy the Christian eucharist in any other church.

And yet, although they will not allow that we celebrate the Lord's Supper according to the institution of Christ, and for this reason regard it a great ecclesiastical offence for their membership to come to our tables, they will hardly deny, I think, that the Savior and Holy Spirit are sometimes with us during our sacramental seasons. Will they deny that *God* smiles upon us at these times? Although they think we depart widely from the instructions of Christ, they will not surely deny this. But is their moral sense so refined that they cannot partake in a communion at which the Trinity is present? May they not do what the Holy One does, and does thousands of times every year, in the different Pe-dobaptist churches of Christendom?

Again: the usages of the denomination are such as imply that they are the *only* Christian church in existenc. To be sure, they believe there are Christians in the other professedly Christian organizations, but they do not regard any organization but their own, as a regularly constituted *Christian church*. The others are so essentially defective as churches, that they must deny to them the character of *Christian* churches. That this is so, is made obvious by such facts as these. They will not, at least very many of them, give to their members letters of dismission and recommendation to go to other churches. When individuals go to them from other churches, they do not acknowledge their hav-

ing been constituted members of the Christian church, but proceed in admitting them into it, by hearing a relation of their Christian experience, and giving to them, the second time, the ordinance of baptism. So, also, if a Christian minister go among them, he is under the necessity of submitting to a usage which implies the humiliating concession that he has not been regularly constituted a member of Christ's church, or properly inducted into the office of the Christian ministry. One of their ministers, (Rev. Mr. Haguc, of Boston,) during the sermon at the recent dedication of one of their houses of worship in Lowell, when speaking of the evangelical denominations, is reported to have said, "We are the only people who make regeneration a condition of admission to the church." Now, why these usages and sentiments, if they regard the other ecclesiastical organizations as Christian churches? These considerations may weigh nothing in the minds of others against becoming Baptists, but I am frank to confess they do in my own. I do not deny that those who hold these peculiarities honestly believe them to be right; and I am equally honest in believing them wrong; and also in believing, that when unwarrantable efforts are made to secure the assent of others to them, it is duty to oppose such efforts.

